

UF Professor Heads CIA Linked Group

School Officials Deny University Involvement

By HAROLD KENNEDY

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A UF professor, who is director of a foundation listed as CIA supported, also directs the annual UF-sponsored Conference on the Caribbean the Alligator learned Tuesday. But University officials deny any CIA affiliation with either UF group.

Dr. A. Curtis Wilgus, UF research professor of history and director of the Conference on the

Caribbean, was named by the Tampa Tribune as a director of the Pan American Foundation. The foundation was listed by the New York Times on Feb. 19 as one of several groups financed by the Central Intelligence Agency. The Times story claimed that the foundation was located at the UF.

School officials denied the UF was connected with the Foundation at all. The foundation headquarters were located in the Gainesville Security Building until 1964 when it moved to Coral Gables, said Dr. Lyle McAllister, director of the Center for Latin American Studies, Tuesday. Wilgus was "operating as a private individual" as director of the Foundation, he added, and not as an official of the university.

Wilgus is also director of the Conference on the Caribbean, an annual conference which discusses political, social, educational, and economic problems in the Caribbean area. Representatives from all over the United States and many Latin American countries attend annually. Nearly 400 people attended the 1965 conference.

Until 1965, the conference was financed by such private organizations as the United Fruit Company and Alcoa.

Since then, according to McAllister, UF has picked up the tab -- estimated at \$3500 - \$4500 per year. McAllister said most of the expense was in paying speakers expenses. The money was thought to come from the president's contingency fund.

Each speaker for the conference is expert in one aspect of the political, social, educational, or economic condition of the Caribbean area. Many of the Americans have worked in State and Defense Department intelligence offices before, according to biographical sketches in the UF's office of Informational Services.

Wilgus organized the Conference in 1951, soon after he accepted the post of Director of the School For Latin American Studies.

This was near the time CIA began subsidizing private organizations but McAllister, who succeeded Wilgus when the School became the Center for Latin American Studies in 1963, feels there is no connection between the Conference and the CIA.

The Foundation, which was incorporated in 1930 by a "group of leaders in inter-American affairs from the U.S. and Latin America," lists among its activities travel, and research.

It also publishes a "Journal of Inter-American Studies" which bore the imprint of the UF School of Latin American Studies until 1963, when the school became the center and McAllister succeeded Wilgus.

That year, the journal moved its offices to Coral Gables and the University of Miami. It is still published in Gainesville. For a while the journal was circulated by the foundation without charge.

The journal is highly respectable in academic circles, said McAllister, who thought it might

be discredited now because of the tie-in with CIA.

Vice President of Academic Affairs Robert Mautz agreed with him. "That's the trouble with CIA money," he said, "Something which is respectable suddenly becomes suspect."

Wilgus was out of town Tuesday, according to his secretary, and would not be back until Thursday. The Tribune reported that he was enroute for here from New York, via Washington.

He has reportedly been planning to resign from UF for over a year. Once source reports he intends to move to Miami.

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